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Request for Public Comment

Heber Veratrum Harvest Project

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Wasatch County, Utah

The Heber-Kamas Ranger District of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (UWCNF) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a proposal to allow the harvest of approximately 120 acres of *Veratrum californicum* (Veratrum), also known by the common name corn lily, from the upper reaches of the West Fork of the Duchesne River watershed near Heber Mountain in Wasatch County, Utah. The action proposed by the Forest Service is to allow harvest of up to 120 acres of Veratrum out of a total approximately 265 acres growing in the project area and nearly 800 acres growing on the Heber-Kamas Ranger District. Beginning in 2020, it is anticipated that between 10 and 20 acres of Veratrum would be harvested per year over a time period of 6 to 12 years. However, should the demand for raw materials increase, harvest may increase up to 50 acres in a single year. At this rate, the Veratrum harvest would last only 3 years before the available Veratrum was completely harvested. Additional areas not to exceed 5 acres annually would be disturbed by temporary roads, staging areas, and seasonal camping sites for harvest crews. The proposed project would also include restoration and seeding of native vegetation of all harvested areas in accordance with UWCNF specifications at the conclusion of each year's harvest. Veratrum root harvest would be permitted as a commercial forest product utilizing a Timber Sale Contract with conditions and provisions as described in 36 CFR Part 223.

A portion of the harvest area totaling 36 acres is proposed within the Vat Creek and West Fork Roadless Areas. However, no permanent or temporary roads will be established to facilitate harvest operations. Rather, all access to Veratrum stands will be gained by overland travel across native soils. The Intermountain Region Roadless Coordinator was consulted with regard to the project actions. Because the project does not include prohibited activities (timber cutting or road construction), the project complies with the roadless rule.

The proposed project and other information are available for review at the following URL:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55727>

Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from Daniel P. Jauregui at (435) 783-4338 or (435) 654-0470 or daniel.jauregui@usda.gov.

The UWCNF Heber-Kamas District Ranger is the responsible official.

How to Comment and Timeframe

This 30-day comment period on the Proposed Action represents the only opportunity for the public to provide specific written comments on the project and thereby have standing to object. Persons who submit comments should include: (1) their name, address, and contact telephone number or e-mail address; (2) the name of the project on which they are submitting comments; and (3) specific written comments regarding the project, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider when reaching a decision. Before including address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal information in a comment, be advised that your entire comment—including the personal information—may be made publicly available at any time as part of the project-documentation process. While you may request in your comment that your personal information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

This project implements the Forest Plan and is not proposed under the authority of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. It is subject to the objection regulations found at 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. For information on the objection process, contact Daniel P. Jauregui at (435) 783-4338 or (435) 654-0470 or daniel.jauregui@usda.gov.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in The Provo Daily Herald. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Persons who wish to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period. Persons providing comments are responsible for submitting them by the close of the comment period.

Written comments must be submitted to: Heber-Kamas Ranger District, 2460 South Highway 40, PO Box 190, Heber City, UT 84035. Because the Heber Ranger District Office is closed to the public due to COVID-19 issues, hand delivery of comments will not be available.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-uinta-heber@usda.gov. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Comments also may be faxed to (435) 654-5772.

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